Understanding the book of Revelation

 Fall 2017 | Session #4

1. The Scroll Given To The Lamb –– Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” –– Chapter 5: 1–14

**1**Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. **2**And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" **3**But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. **4** I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. **5** Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." **6** Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spiritsof God sent out into all the earth. **7** He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. **8** And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. **9** And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.**10** You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." **11** Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. **12** In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"**13** Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" **14** The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

* + 1. A dramatic announcement that shifts our vision – “Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll…”
			1. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ scroll not a leaf book – Revelation would be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
			2. The Image Comes From **(**Ezekiel 2:9-10 & 3:1-4)[[1]](#footnote-2)
1. The Scroll? —> Three Things We Are Told:
	* + 1. It Is In God’s Right Hand:
				1. The Scrolls Message? **––** Most commentators think this Scroll is a type of (Last Will Testament). The Scroll speaks of God’s **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** of the world’s affairs. The Scroll speaks of His response to the reality of evil and the need for rescue through the Messiah and the ekklessia (the church).
			2. It is written on both sides?
			3. It is sealed with 7 seals?
2. The Great Angels Challenging Question: *“Who is worthy to break the seals?”*
	* + 1. The Answer and Its Implications:
				1. *“Absolutely No One, No One Is Worthy:”*

 –– The suffering sorrow of the world and of the saints would be endless.

* + - * 1. The Impact:
				2. Oh, wait —> “don’t weep.” –– For the Lion of Judah[[2]](#footnote-3) – the root of David (Isaiah 11:1, 10; 15:12) has triumphed (overcome) and is worthy (able & allowed) to open the 7 seals.
1. “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne …”
	* + 1. What Is Seen and Some Of What It Means
				1. Jesus’ place of standing in the center of the throne:
				2. A Lion/Lamb:

–– Note the basis of “worthiness” is most closely tied to Jesus’ embracing of death for the sake of others.

* + - * 1. Slain/Alive:

Swete declares: “Few passages of scripture show at one and the same time the ‘majesty and the meekness’ of Jesus Christ – while combining the humiliation of his death and the glory of his risen life”.

* + - * 1.  7 Eyes and 7 Horns:
1. Worship Escalates Around the Throne

In the book of Revelation: *“Heaven is revealed to earth as the homeland of music.”*  –– Christina Rosselti

* **Last week:** I introduced you to the first songs in Revelation and the profound role they play in declaring the nature of God (**Theology**) of Jesus the Christ (**Christology**), the nature of man/woman (**Anthropology**) and the rescue or saving of man/woman (**Soteriology**). –– Please return to this section for review and reflection.
	+ - 1. The Theme of the Songs Of Revelation 4–5.
			2. Through the five short songs of Rev. 4-5 John packs in profound theology regarding the nature of God the Father, and God the Son. Here the songs focus on the affects of Jesus’ death on humanity, making the way for men and women to become God’s redeemed children.
				1. **The holiness of the Lord God Almighty:** who is the eternal one. (4:8) Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”
				2. **God alone is worthy** **to receive worship. —>** Because he alone is creator and sustainer of all things. (4:11) "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”
				3. **The worthiness of Jesus** (the Lamb) to open the scroll due to his sacrificial death by which men/women were redeemed from all the nations and made into a Kingdom of priests who serve God and will reign on the earth. (5:9-10) And they sang a new song: *"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.****10*** *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”*

**A New Song** **reflecting a new reality;** a new covenant; a new place and purpose! (Ps.33:3; 96:1; 98:1etc.)

Swete declares: —> “Few passages of scripture show at one and the same time the ‘majesty and the meekness’ of Jesus Christ – while combining the humiliation of his death and the glory of his risen life”.

* + - * 1. **The worthiness of Jesus to receive the same worship offered to the Lord God Almighty ––** who sits on the throne. (5:12) “In a loud voice they sang: *"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”*
				2. **A repetition of #2 and #4 except that they are now fully identified with each other** **and both occupy the throne; one sitting and one standing.**  (5:13) “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’”
			1. The songs end with the 4 Living Creatures saying “Amen” **and the elders once again are on their faces worshiping.**

**II.** *Chapter 6: 1–17: Breaking of the Seals –***– *Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”***

1 I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" 2 I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. 3 When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" 4 Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword. 5 When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6 Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quartof wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" 7 When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" 8 I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.  9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. 12 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. 14 The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. 15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

**A.** General Observations On The 7 Seals:

* + 1. The seven seals are closely patterned along the thematic lines of the “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” (Mt. 24:1-35; Mark 13; Luke 21: 5-33). Eugene Peterson sees the 7 seals as a “*seven point sermon on the panorama of history.”*
			1. The distresses upon the earth are the typical events found in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ literature.
			2. The 7 seals (later to be followed by 7 trumpets & 7 bowls) –– These seals have to do with
			3. “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” or what Jesus called
			4. “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” in his discourses on the end of the age.
			5. (Mt.24:7–9) Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earth-quakes in various places. **8**All these are the beginning of **birth pains**. **9**“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death,and you will be hated by all nations because of me.
		2. The Aim of Prophetic Words of Judgments or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (See article at end of notes.)
			1. Understanding “wrath” requires \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Note what has already been seen and heard regarding the character of the Lord.
			2. It gives **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** to the Jesus person who is reading; **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** them as they suffer due to the presences of evil in the world about them.
			3. (John16:33) *“In this world you shall suffer many tribulations but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world.” (Lk. 10:2-3) “I send you like sheep amongst the wolves…” –– (Mt. 16:18) “But the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.”*
		3. Such words offer a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to change while change is still a real and viable alternative to the finality of the judgments on evil.

***AMOS 5: 12*** *For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes**and deprive the poor of justice in the courts.* ***13****Therefore the prudent keep quiet in such times, for the times are evil.* ***14*** *Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is.* ***15****Hate evil, love good;**maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy**on the remnant of Joseph.*

***Jonah 4****:But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry.* ***2****He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.*

***Revelation 2:4-****5 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at the first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place.*

***Revelation 3:19-20****: Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hear my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”*

* + 1. Taken in this light, prophecies of judgment are yet another expression of the humanity.

B. Seal 1-4 The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse

* + - 1. General Observations On **Seals 1-4:**
				1. Image comes from Zechariah 1:8-17 & 6:1-8. Each seal is associated with a horse whose color is symbolic.
				2. The first four seals have to do with ***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****.* The seals address the basic nature of human history and the tensions that exist due to the fallen human condition. This is the way life has become due to sin’s effect.
				3. They seem like powerful destructive “–––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––” that have been unleashed in the world due to the rebellion of man and woman.
				4. **Called Out & Given:** At the breaking of each seal one of the 4 creatures calls the affect out and we are told that, “its rider was given.” This appears to be a way to remind the readers that –– all that is taking place is known to God and that God is not passive in the face of injustice and evil, but actively engaged with the dire problem and its ultimate cure.

God does not make all things happen, but he does allow humanity to go its own way: (Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them over (released them) to their sinful desires…).

**Pondering:** Can I have a soft, engaged and godly heart if I don’t learn to “hate what is evil?” And how can I learn to hate what is evil and love what is good, without making judgments? (Psalms 97:10; Proverbs 8:12–14; Amos 5:15)

* + - * 1. **Revelation does not suggest a deterministic or fatalistic worldview.** In fact much the opposite since the book constantly calls for men and women to exercise their free will and to repent and overcome rebellion, disbelief and the evil that springs from it.

2. The First Seal —> The Horseman Of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**1** I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" **2** I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

**The hardest of the four to interpret.** The rider is similar in dress to Jesus in (Rev.19:11-16).

Some think this is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but that is unlikely since he is the one opening the seals and would not likely be called out by one of the Creatures. Jesus is described in Chapter 19 as having many \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, where this rider has only a crown and a bow.

Some have suggested that this rider is the “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” going out into the world, but this rider is associated with the others and they bring mayhem and death, not life and shalom.

Finally, some see here the rising of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It keeps the parallelism with the other 3 horsemen in place. All are negative instruments of death, and Jesus speaks of this rising of false Christ’s in Mt. 24:24.

Most likely the white rider is exactly what he is said to represent – conquest

3. Seal 2–4

The Second Horseman is **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** between people leading to their slaying each other.

**3** When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" **4** Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

**Notice:** He has no crown (not a king or emperor building empire through conquest); he is general human discord brought on by envy, pride, lust and anger, which leads to murder from Cain to Judas and beyond to our own day.

 The Third Horseman Is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5** When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. **6** Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quartof wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!”

Note that the essentials of life [wheat and barley] are enormously expensive where as the non-essentials [oil and wine] are not even damaged. Life is eschewed, as is the heart!

The Fourth Horseman Is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**7** When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" **8** I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him.

The other three riders are his entourage. Together the riders are given freedom to use all means to carry out their work (sword, famine, plague, etcetera). But, they are only given freedom over 1/4 of the earth.

4. The 5th Seal The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The Altar

**9** When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. **10** They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" **11** Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

A sudden shift, apparently back to heaven, which is depicted as a temple with an altar. Under the altar are martyrs who like their Lord have been slain (like Antipas of Rev. 2:14), –– Killed, “because of the word of God and the testimony they maintained.” (Go online and read the Polycarp story).

Digression: Theme Of Martyrs In Revelation

**Martyrs Also Seen In:** Revelation [13:15] “…those who refused to worship the beasts image and where killed.” [18:24] “… all who have been killed on the earth.” [20:4] “… those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and the word.” –– ***Some see the great multitude of 7:9 as martyrs.***

**Two Types of Martyrs in Church History:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Martyrs: all those who faithfully followed Christ [overcomers] and suffered physical death due to their witness. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Martyrs, faithful like the “red”, suffered –– but not death – like John himself.

**Acts 1:8 And A Deeply Held Assumption:** Here we may be coming face to face with the deep assumption that a Christian is a person who has died to him/her self and the world if indeed he is a Christian at all –– all Christians are martyrs!

Acts 1:8 “… and you shall be my witnesses (martyrs)… –– Revelations concern regarding being faithful witnesses.

**The Martyrs Prayer:** The martyrs pray (speak) to God for their ***vindication*** –– and are given the garments of righteousness, like the obedient angels –– but told to wait until their number is complete.

In Rev. there is an undetermined relationship between the prayers of the saints and the actions of God –– not unlike Israel’s prayers in Egypt. –– The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out (prayer) because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. (Exodus 3:7,9)

***On line see: “Prayer and Work” by CS Lewi***

***b.***  An Incomplete and Restless Heaven?

Dr. Larry Hurtado notes that if this scene is in heaven then there is a state of incompleteness allowed even there.

The martyred are not pictured as being at a complete rest. They are interceding to God for their day of vindication before the world’s powers.

They may be at rest in their Lord but they [and apparently all of heaven] share in the tension of the delay – they too pray – *come quickly Lord Jesus*

The 6th Seal

(Rev. 6:12 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. 14 The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. 15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

**A great shaking of cosmic proportions.** Images of the end of the world. “The great day of their (the one on the throne and the Lamb) wrath has come, and who can stand?”

See Amos On –– “The Day Of The Lord.” (5:18–20)

The 7th Seal And The Purpose Of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ In Revelation

The tension has been raised to the breaking point. The final seal is to be breached and the culmination of all things should break in upon us. But…

The actual opening of the scroll is never described. The 6th seal brings us to the very end of things and the 7th seal, which would lay open the scroll, takes us on a surprising ride.

the purpose of interludes? John throws in an interlude, with its sudden shift away from the conclusion to create a pause for John to make his most important point to his readers.

1. **The Sealing of the 144K and the Uncountable Multitude: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” –– Chapter 7: 1–17**

*Rev. 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: 3 "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." 4 Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.* ***5*** *From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000,* ***6*** *from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,* ***7*** *from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,* ***8*** *from the tribe of Zebulon 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.*

***9****After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.* ***10****And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."* ***11****All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,* ***12****saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!*

***13****Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"* ***14*** *I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* ***15*** *Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.* ***16*** *Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.* ***17*** *For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

1. The interlude introduces us to the marking or sealing of a 144,000.
* An open contrast to the upcoming “mark” of the beast”.
1. Who Is Marked? —>12K from the 12tribes of Israel.
2. The Great Multitude Of Vs. 9? –––– The language changes and begins to mix the allusion to the son’s of Jacob (Israel) with clearly Jesus people from all nations, tribes and language groups, dressed in white robes having been washed in the blood of the Lamb.
	* 1. **Who Are They? Who is this great uncountable multitude of vs. 9 and the 144,000?**
			+ **Mixed Views:** Some see the 144 K as literally the remnant of Israel saved out of the world, while others see the 144 K and those in v. 9 as one and the same, simply showing the continuity between the OT and the NT.
			+ This associating Israel with the Church is also found in James 1:1 … to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.” St. Paul sees the community (church) of Jesus as the “true Israel.” (James 1:1; Eph. 3:4-9; 2Cor. 5:17-20; and Gal.6:15)
			+ John is asked by an elder, “Who they are?” he responds that he does not know but surely this elder knows
			+ Yes indeed this is all those who have come out of [overcome] the great tribulation and they have washed their robes white in the blood of the lamb. (See Isaiah 1:18 and Rev. 22:14).
			1. **What Do They Do?** They join in worship with the growing throng around the Lamb and the ancient of days and their song is a celebration of God and the Lamb who alone is the source of true salvation.
			2. **What is the message of the Interlude? —>** Hold fast in the midst of growing distress and tribulation. Be overcomers in the face of suffering and even death, like dear brother Antipas. See the final outcome and live in light of it **to all who overcome there is a “therefore”** Rev. 7:15 **Therefore, "they are** before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. 16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

"What is the biblical understanding of the wrath of God?" From: [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

**Answer:***Wrath* is defined as “the emotional response to perceived wrong and injustice,” often translated as “anger,” “indignation,” “vexation,” or “irritation.” Both humans and God express wrath. But there is vast difference between the wrath of God and the wrath of man. God’s wrath is holy and always justified; man’s is never holy and rarely justified.

In the Old Testament, the wrath of God is a divine response to human sin and disobedience. Idolatry was most often the occasion for divine wrath. [Psalm 78:56-66](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2078.56-66%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) describes Israel’s idolatry. The wrath of God is consistently directed towards those who do not follow His will ([Deuteronomy 1:26-46](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%201.26-46%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank); [Joshua 7:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Josh%207.1%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank); [Psalm 2:1-6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%202.1-6%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). The Old Testament prophets often wrote of a day in the future, the "day of wrath" ([Zephaniah 1:14-15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zeph%201.14-15%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). God’s wrath against sin and disobedience is perfectly justified because His plan for mankind is holy and perfect, just as God Himself is holy and perfect. God provided a way to gain divine favor—repentance—which turns God’s wrath away from the sinner. To reject that perfect plan is to reject God’s love, mercy, grace and favor and incur His righteous wrath.

The New Testament also supports the concept of God as a God of wrath who judges sin. The story of the rich man and Lazarus speaks of the judgment of God and serious consequences for the unrepentant sinner ([Luke 16:19–31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2016.19%E2%80%9331%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). [John 3:36](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.36%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on Him.” The one who believes in the Son will not suffer God’s wrath for his sin, because the Son took God’s wrath upon Himself when He died in our place on the cross ([Romans 5:6–11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.6%E2%80%9311%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). Those who do not believe in the Son, who do not receive Him as Savior, will be judged on the day of wrath ([Romans 2:5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.5%E2%80%936%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)).

Conversely, human wrath is warned against in [Romans 12:19](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.19%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), [Ephesians 4:26](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%204.26%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), and [Colossians 3:8-10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%203.8-10%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). God alone is able to avenge because His vengeance is perfect and holy, whereas man’s wrath is sinful, opening him up to demonic influence. For the Christian, anger and wrath are inconsistent with our new nature, which is the nature of Christ Himself ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%205.17%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). To realize freedom from the domination of wrath, the believer needs the Holy Spirit to sanctify and cleanse his heart of feelings of wrath and anger. [Romans 8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) shows victory over sin in the life of one who is living in the Spirit ([Romans 8:5-8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.5-8%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). [Philippians 4:4-7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%204.4-7%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) tells us that the mind controlled by the Spirit is filled with peace.

The wrath of God is a fearsome and terrifying thing. Only those who have been covered by the blood of Christ, shed for us on the cross, can be assured that God’s wrath will never fall on them. “Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!” ([Romans 5:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.9%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)) .

1. *Ezek. 2:9 Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, 10 which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.*

*Ezek. 3:1 And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. 3 Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth. 4 He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In Genesis (49:9) the patriarch [Jacob](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob%22%20%5Co%20%22Jacob) ("Israel") gave the symbol of the lion to his tribe when he refers to his son Judah as a "Young Lion" when blessing him. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)